

**Thursday of Week 9 of Ordinary Time / Sajnos, nincs magyar fordítás. Hasznald a Google Translate lehetoseget!**

(Tb 6:10-11; 7:1bcde, 9-17; 8:4-9a; Mk 12:28-34) In The Screwtape Letters, C.S. Lewis presents a series of letters from a master demon in the “lowerarchy” of hell to an apprentice demon assigned to tempt someone on earth. When lust is mentioned in the correspondence, Screwtape admits that it is a matter of considerable tedium to devils. Lust is one sin that demons never practice since they don’t have bodies. Instead, they specialize in pride and envy. But Screwtape is quick to add that lust is a very necessary part of their training. This admission agrees well with reality. At Fatima, our Lady said, “More souls go to hell for sins committed against the sixth commandment than for any other reason.” She also said, “Many marriages are not good; they do not please our Lord and are not of God.” This statement was made 100 years ago in 1917. Since then, immodest fashions have been introduced. Umpteen different forms of contraception have been invented. Pornography has gained access to anyone’s pocket or purse via smartphones. Preposterous counterfeits of matrimony have been sanctioned by law. We can only imagine how much worse things are today.

In our first reading, Sarah’s father, Raguel, tells his soon-to-be son-in-law, Tobiah, that his daughter’s seven previous marriages had failed. Each of her husbands died when he approached her on their wedding night. This was the work of a devil, but Tobiah’s subsequent prayer for mercy – which we also heard in today’s first reading – helps us understand what made each groom vulnerable to the demon’s attack. Let’s listen again to part of that prayer! Tobiah said, “Blessed are you, O God of our fathers... You said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone; let us make him a partner like himself.' Now, Lord, you know that I take this wife of mine not because of lust, but for a noble purpose. Call down your mercy on me and on her, and allow us to live together to a happy old age.” If lust caused Sarah’s seven marriages to fail, it was purity that saved Tobiah from the unhappy fate of her seven previous husbands.

Without purity, we cannot keep Jesus’ double commandment of love, which we heard in today’s gospel. Without purity, we can’t love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. Without purity, we can’t love our neighbor as ourselves. Purity is the catalyst for true love. Impurity makes us willing slaves of Satan. Purity makes us willing slaves of God. Impurity is a demanding taskmaster. Some people fall into impurity month after month, year after year. Why confess the same sins over and over again when you don’t have to? Tobiah’s solution to temptations against purity was prayer. And his prayer was heard, but we have far more powerful prayers today under the New Testament. Through her Rosary, our Lady is the total victory solution to impurity. Say five decades every day, slowly and devoutly and you will stay pure! If not, say another five decades daily! If that doesn’t work either, 15 decades surely will. And there’s a bonus. Not only does our Lady make every devoted friend of her Rosary heroic in the practice of virtue, she will also make him or her very, very happy in the process. This extraordinary peace or joy may not be as visceral as impurity, but it is far more sublime. Pray your Rosary day in and day out and joy will catch you too by surprise! So be it! Amen! Mary, cause of our joy! Pray for us!